

## ASPIRATION.

ALL the glory of the King's daughter is within, in golden borders,—clothed round about with vanities. After her virgins shall be brought to the King. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing. They shall be brought into the temple of the King.

## PRAYER.

VOUCHSAFE, O Lord, we beg of Thee, to grant us, Thy servants, the gift of heavenly grace; that as in the childbirth of the Blessed Virgin, our salvation began, we may obtain an increase of peace.



## EIGHTH DAY.

## The Flower of the Name.

"I came out of the mouth of the Most High; the first-born before all creatures. I made, that in the heavens there should rise light that never falleth, and as a cloud I covered all the earth. I dwelt in the highest places, and My throne is in a pillar of a cloud."

THERE is mystery in names. All objects come to our understanding through their different names. The objects themselves are more than mere names, but they must be named in order to be clearly known, though when named, they may not be fully known. Names distinguish things each from the other. Names are the titles of things. What is nameless is unknown, and has no real existence for us. The nameless is a nothing. Names are symbols that cannot be separated from their objects without producing confusion in speech as well as chaos in the mind. Each object owns, in its own right, its own name, and cannot be robbed of it. The lily is a lily, and the rose is a rose, and each must keep its own exclusive title in order to be known. All speech is based primarily on nouns, which are names of objects. This is the fundamental part of every language, and the other parts of speech have meanings only as they refer to names. But names of intelligent beings are greater than names of mere material things; because the higher the object in the ascending scale of creation, the greater the name. The name of God is supreme and incommunicable. He alone can bear it.



Angels in heaven have each their particular name, the mark of their individuality in the angelic world. Some of their names, by revelation, we know, and each of their names has a special, exclusive meaning of its own. Michael, the prince of the heavenly hosts, Raphael, Gabriel, are not only named in heaven, but their names are known on earth. In the human race, each child of Adam has his own especial name.

In the Christian order, we each receive our name in baptism, as in the old covenant days the Hebrews received theirs on the day of circumcision. Unlike the angels, we have family names, for we are the offspring of human generation, having fathers and mothers. Not so the angels. They have special names, but the name of the particular choir in the heavenly hierarchy to which they belong corresponds to our family name. Think as you please, we and our names go together, and is it strange? our names will last longer than ourselves. When the souls of men have gone to eternity and their bodies to the resting place of the dead, their names still live; some a little while, some a longer while, some for ages, and a few forever. Our merit or demerit passes into our names, remains there, and lasts after we have passed away.

Human history is a necrology. From the days of Adam until yesterday, it is names, and the name of the dead that give life to the record of human events. Mortal men are made immortal by their names; and, ah! fallen from our first estate, though we are, what glorious names have been written in the annals of our race. Beyond the Messiah's day, out of the days of the law of nature, Adam, Abel, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, then Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Esther,

David, Solomon, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, Zacharias, Malachy and others not here named, God's instruments in the order of providence. And in the outer world, lying in the darkness of idolatry, conquerors, poets, philosophers, whose names are living still, and who, in their day and way, unconsciously furthered the designs of God; and all to prepare the world for the coming of Him whose name is above all names, Jesus Christ. But before His name is written on the first page of the New Testament, we read the name of Mary. Her name was the morning star that shone before the sun of His name rose on the horizon of human history.

His earthly name, Jesus Christ, is as incommunicable as His name in eternity, the Eternal Word; and it was His Mother who, giving Him his humanity, gave Him, according to the angel's word, the adorable name, Jesus. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus." His name is the light of the world, but He would not have borne that name had not His Mother borne Him.

In the eclipses of your souls, and, ah! their shadows fall on all, and when you cry for less of dark and more of bright, do you not call on the name of Jesus, the eternal light? His Mother gave Him His name. Can you forget that?

His name is a name of strength, and when you are weak and passion is strong, and you feel yourselves unequal to cope with the power of evil, do you not have recourse to the power of the name of Jesus? Well, His Mother named Him so. Always remember that. And His name is Truth, and Hope, and Love, and Everlasting Life; and His name Jesus has infinite beautiful meanings besides. The evangelists named Him Christ; and asked, before His passion, "Art thou Christ?" He



answered the High Priest: "Thou hast said it." But His greater name, His Saviour name, is Jesus! and His Mother gave it to Him.

In your sins and in your sorrows, do you fall down before the Saviour Jesus, and plead for the mercy He never refuses? Do you breathe His name as if it were the very breath of the life of your souls? Remember that the mother who bore Him named Him, and love and honor His Mother's name. And His Mother's name is Mary, and, next to His, that name is the highest and the holiest.

Thousands bear the Virgin Mother's name and glorify it by their virtues, but many, alas, are named with her name who are not worthy to bear it. In no Mary on earth, does, or can, the name mean what it means in her. And what does it mean in her? It has depths we cannot fathom. It has heights we cannot touch. It has beauties beyond the reach of words, no matter how beautiful. It has glories beyond the reach of loftiest thought. It has real meanings of relations to Christ, which never have been and never can be told. It has mystical meanings of relations to the Father and the Holy Spirit beyond our comprehension. It has spiritual meanings of relations with the angelic world and with ours, which nor man nor angel can adequately describe. It is, in a sense, an eternal name, for the name was appointed to her in the eternal decree of her predestination. St. Peter Damian says, that the name of Mary came directly out of the treasury of the Divinity.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost decreed the name from all eternity. It was praised and glorified by the angels from the beginning of the world. It is the name of alliance between heaven and earth, and God and man;

not in the infinite sense in which the name of Jesus Christ bears that title, but in the highest and holiest sense which the name of a finite creature can reach. It is a name fragrant with all spiritual sweetnesses. It is a mirror which reflects more of the light of the name of Jesus Christ than all the rest of creation. It is the everlasting accord of the name of Jesus. They have sounded together from all eternity, Jesus and Mary, the divine note and the human note, in the glorious hymn of God's mercy. Sound either apart, and the music is false. Each note is in need of the other in the true song of redemption.

Her name is the pure and sacred vase which contains the chrism of the name of Christ. Her name is the holy lamp of the wisest of virgin of virgins, which burns with the divine oil of the name of Christ. Her name is a crown in which are intertwined all human perfections, all spiritual grace and glories only inferior to God's. Her name is a garden, "a closed garden," full of flowers, which bloom with the beauty of God. Her name is a pure fountain, high up on the loftiest mountains of the sanctities, whence flows to us, and over the world forever, the holy stream of Christ's most precious blood, with salvation in its every crimson drop. Her name is the mysterious tree, with one root in the Trinity and the other on earth, in Joachim and Anna, which has produced the fruit of eternal life, Jesus Christ. Her name is like the "burning bush," which Moses saw, growing on sinless ground and flaming with the light of the name Jesus. Her name is like the ark of the new covenant, with the manna of the name of Christ within it.

Her name is the pure, white, finite shore that girdles the sea of the infinite. Her name is the golden cloud,



floating in the heavens and over the earth, with not one dark spot on it, and filled with the splendors of the Divinity. Her name is like the pillar of fire that goes before the chosen people, guiding them across the bleak deserts of time, to the land of eternal promise—it, the pillar, and the name of Jesus the fire that flames around it. Her name is like the dove of the deluge, bearing the olive branch of the peace of the name of Christ across the angry waters to all who are in the ark of salvation. Her name is the beautiful gate that opens into the temple of grace. Her name is the holy, mysterious veil that hangs before the Holy of Holies, where dwells the living name of Christ.

Her name is like a valley, where the flowers of the graces of the name of Christ bloom forever in the bright spring-tide and summer-days of Mercy. Her name is the star, with never shadow on it, that shines the highest and the brightest in the heavens of faith and hope and love, to which the magnet of the heart of every storm-tossed mariner on the sea of life is turned, the polar star of heaven, with the light of Jesus in it, to guide their way and lead them to the eternal haven. Her name is the glorious rainbow of peace and hope, spanning all the days of time, from the garden of Eden to the valley of judgment, on which the light of the Sun of Justice shines forever reflected, and beneath which walk the generations who love the name and keep the law of her Divine Son.

From the beginning of the Church, all down the centuries until this very day, true faith has bound together the names of Jesus and Mary, as they were bound together in the great decree of mercy in eternity; as their persons were bound together in the promise in

Eden, and as they were bound together in the bond of the birth in Bethlehem, the bond of blood, and as they were bound together on the hill of Calvary, in the bond of sorrow. Separate one name from the other, and the mystery of the Incarnation is a broken thing. The name of Jesus leans on the name of Mary for its human meaning, as much and as really as the name of Jesus leans on the name of the Eternal Father for its divine meaning.

No wonder that the name of Mary sounds round the altar of her Son in our Holy Church. Say the Apostles Creed. First is named God, the Father; then Jesus Christ, His only Son, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." His name is linked to the Father's, the Holy Ghost's name to His, and to the Holy Ghost is linked the name of the Virgin Mary. So the Christian Creed binds the names together. Can that Church be called Christian that will break the holy circle of the four names? No. In the Greek Church, and the others of Eastern rites, they keep, as we, the names forever united in their liturgies as in their creeds. And if the Creed be right, we and they are right. Alas! for the so-called churches who have banished the name of Mary from their services; or who, if they speak her name, do it in halting tone and bated breath. The New Testament is, in highest sense, the everlasting "Religious Service" of man's redemption, and the prelude to it is ever the same, it begins with the name of Mary, of whom was born Christ.

Oh! Holy Church, thou art the living New Testament, not written by human hands, but formed by the Holy Spirit; thou art the speaking New Testament, and wheresoever thou goest, thou art true to all the



truth of redemption, which is human and divine, and which comes to the world with two inseparable names impressed upon it, names which are the signs of heaven and of earth—Jesus and Mary!

Truths must be revealed to be believed, and beliefs must be taught to be accepted; but faiths must have festivals. In what Church, outside of ours, is feast kept in honor of the Holy Name of Mary? In none. No wonder, then, our Holy Church has feasts besides her Sundays. Must the "communion of saints" lie in the Creed, a mere, cold dogma, to be read with the eyes and accepted by the mind,—only that and nothing more? No, no, the truly, fully Christian heart needs something more. Dogmas must have days of festival, when they clothe themselves with earthly beauty, and thus appeal to faith's high and holy emotions; and holy names, as well, must have their holy-days. The calendar of the Church is spiritual, not secular. The world keeps feasts of great events and of names which it considers great, and it is well; but we, we celebrate events still greater, and commemorate names by sanctity made immortal; and next to the name of the all-holy, Jesus Christ, what reason can forbid feast in honor of His purest Mother Mary? So, scattered through the months of the year, are days set apart to honor the Mother who has honored all the days of time. In each of the feasts in which she receives the homage of our honor, beside her stands Christ, who alone claims our adoration; while in every feast of His in which He demands our supreme worship, she stands beside Him and claims her honors as His Mother.

In the spring-tide, when the sun, greatening in brightness and growing in warmth, announces the coming of

the flowers, we keep the feast of the Angelical Annunciation. When summer, like a queen, assumes all her splendors in the month of August, we celebrate the feast of Mary's glorious assumption and coronation. When autumn comes, and men are gathering the fruits of the year, we commemorate, in September, the festival of the nativity of Mary, who was the purest fruit of prophecy and promise. In the mid of winter, when nature looks like death, we keep, with Mary, in Bethlehem, the great festival of the birth of the Giver of that life that never dies; and strewn between these greater festivals, are other days, blessed and bright in their dedication to the blessed Mary

But days pass—their life is only twenty-four hours; they do not last. But temples last; monuments last; orders of men and women last; hymns last. Go through every country in Europe; look upon those grand temples built in the ages of faith; call them dark, if you will, it is the fashion, and ignorance is imitative, but show us in modern days brighter monuments. Show us grander art. Match by modern skill, if you can, the magnificence of those minsters conceived in the heart and built by the hands of true faith. You cannot do it. Your age is too material. It is the age of factories, not the age of temples. It has lost the instincts of spiritual beauty; it is building the material on the ruins of the spiritual. It is an age of reason; yes, but a reason growing materialized and forgetting how to believe. It worships in the workshop of man, not in the temple of God. These eyes that guide this pen have looked, in a wonder passing all words, upon those monuments whose histories are ages and ages; and how many of them bear the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary? It is beyond



our reckoning. From the marble stones hidden in humility deep down in the ground; and, like unknown saints, forming the unseen foundation, up to where the cross, on lofty tower, kisses the skies, comes the evidence of the veneration of the people for the name of Mary. Enter the grand aisles leading up to the Christian's Holy of Holies. At either side altars stand, like sleepless sentinels, to guard the sacramental presence in its own special shrine; and sure you are to find an altar dedicated to Mary there, and sometimes her own altar is, like herself, the altar-mother where her Son in the Eucharist rests.

The stories of the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and tears of souls innumerable, seem still to live in the silences of those glorious temples. Every stone you tread on has its memories. If the feast days pass, the temples last. It was a rule of the Cistercians to dedicate all their churches and chapels and monasteries to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In our Holy Church there is nothing dead. Its truths spring into eternal life in dogmas, its devotion makes itself visible in the material structure of glorious temples; but it goes farther, and enshrines its thoughts and love of Christ and Mary in the holy hymns of Christian poesy. Open the Breviary of the priest and the Missal of the Altar; and read. Out of the hearts of her children, some known but most of them unknown, sound songs thrilling with adoration of Christ and honor of Mary. These songs of music, all spiritual, live on the lips of the priests, and ascend to heaven, breathed by faith, all over the world, day and night; for the Church that is forever preaching is forever praying, and the Church that is forever praying is forever singing Christ's and Mary's praises. But songs, after all, are only words. Love of Christ and Mary calls

for living hymns, and has them. Count, if you can, the religious associations of men and women who are living prayers and living songs of praise.

Enter the monasteries, where men of highest faith abide. Go into the cells of those self-made prisoners. They have preferred the slavery of Christ to the freedom of the world. They are aiming at perfection. Ask them how they are striving to reach it, and they will surely tell you this: "Here we love and adore Christ, and here we love and honor His holy mother, Mary." That is the secret, as well as solace, of their lives.

Enter the gates of a hundred thousand convents, where, like "doves in the clefts of the rocks," dwell the virgins of the Church. They lead the life of purity and prayer. Ask them what brought them there. Ask them what keeps them there. Ask them why their faces wear that look, common to them all, of such unworldly peace. They will tell you: LOVE OF GOD. Ask them who is their model. They will tell you, as if the very name were a prayer: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is living her olden life over again in them. They are virgins like her, but like her, they are mothers too, spiritual mothers, who, by their sacrifices and prayers, are bringing forth Christians into the Church, as Mary brought forth Christ into the world.

Oh! holy name of Mary, how thou art glorified in our Holy Church! True, thou art crowned queen in the heavens, but still thou art living with us on earth, in the beautiful vows of our virgins. The bishops and priests of the Church, under the Pontiff-chief, are the guard of honor of the names of Jesus and Mary.

Christ had a Virgin Mother. Christ has a virgin Church, and the virgin Church must have priests who



will be the virgin fathers of souls. From the Pontiff down to the humblest soldier-priest in the ranks of that guard of honor, faith in Christ the Adorable and love of Mary the Immaculate are the only watchword of all the days, and the battle-call and the triumph-cry. That watchword never changes. 'Tis forever ringing down the ranks.

What though sometimes a traitor deserts? Another soldier takes his place, and leaves no break in the line; and high over the ranks float, side by side, the glorious ensign of Jesus Christ and the beautiful banner of Mary. March on, true soldiers of the cross! You never can halt here below. The enmity between Satan and the woman lasts forever, and between her seed and his seed. In battle for Christ, you battle for her. Jesus and Mary watch the everlasting conflict. March on in the bravery of faith, in the confidence of hope, in the enthusiasm of love; and fadeless crowns of victory shall grace your brows, when, stainless as the hour they were placed in your hands, and wreathed with a thousand glories, you enter in triumph the gates of heaven and lay at the feet of the Eternal Father the standard of Jesus Christ and the banner of Mary.

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ASPIRATION.

HOLY MARY, Mother of God! pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

PRAYER.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thy faithful, who rejoice beneath the name and protection of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, may, by her holy intercession, be delivered from all earthly evils, and reach the eternal joys of heaven.

NINTH DAY.

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The Flower of the Vow.

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"Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear and forget thy people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He is the Lord thy God and Him they shall adore."—*Psalm, xlv.*

CALMLY went on the days in the home of Joachim and Anna.

It was the happiest home earth ever had. What cared the holy couple about the great noisy world without them? They never had mingled in it much; and now since Mary had come to bless the evening of their days,—and the mornings and evenings of all days;—and they had a beautiful world of their own, little thought they of the great world lying without. A journey to Jerusalem, a visit to the Temple on the Feast days of the Law,—a brief stay, and a hurried return were the only things to interrupt the quietness of their life.

They had been childless so long that Jerusalem wondered much when it heard of Mary's birth. They would ask Joachim about his little child; but unlike the aged, Joachim was not garrulous. He kept his own counsel. His words were few, and his questioners saw that somehow he seemed shy of speaking about her. Two years passed away. The child had begun to speak. I wonder what was the first word lisped by the child's pure lips? Seldom did the feet of strangers or visitors